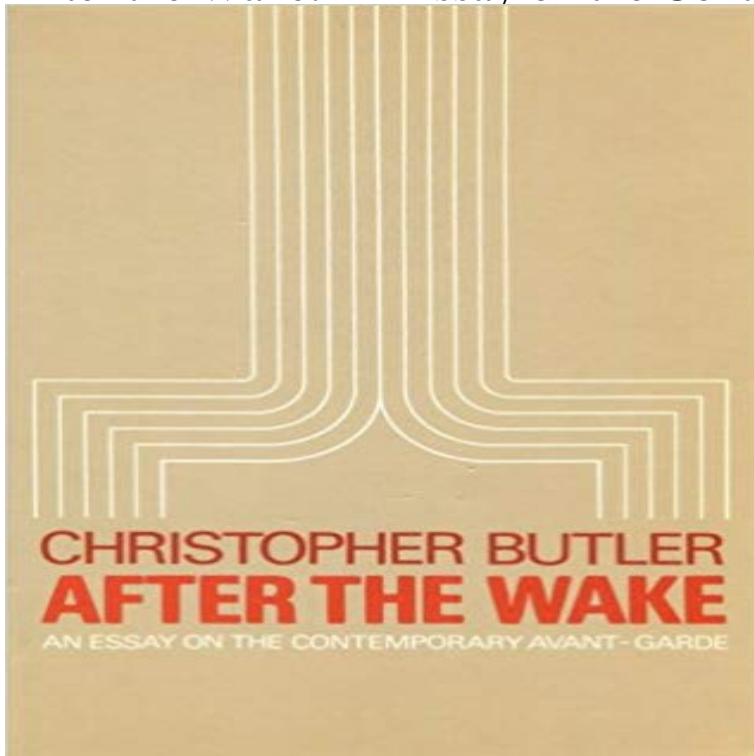


After the Wake: An Essay on the Contemporary Avant Garde



After the Wake provides the reader with a critical guide to the development of experimental literature, music, and painting since the Second World War. A large number of artists central to this new tradition—among them Boulez, Stockhausen, Pollock, Stella, Robbe-Grillet, and Claude Simon—are analyzed, particularly in relation to the dialectic Butler finds in this period, between theoretically over-determined types of artistic organization and those based upon irrationalism or chance. Particular attention is paid to the developments of serial music, abstract painting, and the use of discontinuity and collage in all the arts. The interrelationships between different types of artistic activity and the functions of the avant-garde within the larger culture are also considered at some length, as are the psychological effects of different types of experimental work. The approach throughout is designed to provide a critical framework within which the art of our time can be evaluated. Contents: Introduction -- Part One: History -- Postmodernism and innovation -- Part Two: Exposition -- The serialist idea -- The new novel -- Abstraction and concept -- Time suspended -- The disordered environment: collage -- Change -- Part Three: Polemic -- The avant-garde and the culture -- The experience of the work of art.

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